



Joint Supporters Group Statement – 17th May 2023

Supporters' groups note the decision of the Court on Wednesday 17th May 2023 to grant an adjournment to Southend United Football Club in respect of a winding-up petition served by HM Revenue & Customs.

Whilst it is a relief that our club has not been ordered to be liquidated, or placed in administration, this is not a cause for celebration. The fate of Southend United remains in great peril whilst the current owner, Ron Martin, is at the helm.

His failure to discharge the debt in full – whether due to him lacking the means or the inclination to do so – means the club remains under a transfer and registration embargo imposed by the National League which now looks set to undermine the excellent work undertaken by Head Coach Kevin Maher and his team into 2023/24.

Further to this, the club's loyal staff will continue to hold concerns about their short-term financial position. Their efforts should be appreciated and recognised by all at this time, and we salute their incredible and unwavering dedication to their jobs.

The owner has set out his position to sell or seek investment in Southend United FC, but he continues to hold supporters in contempt, by failing to disclose that the winding-up petition was in place – and selling season tickets during this period – and by failing to acknowledge its existence.

We urge Ron Martin to issue an urgent statement outlining how he intends to resolve the current situation and how the debt to HMRC will be settled as quickly as possible to give the club the best chance of competing in the National League next season. Fans would also appreciate reassurance that the club will be in a position to obtain a license to participate at that level in 2023/24.

We also have a message for any prospective buyers. For too long, despite the best efforts of groups to liaise with those at the top of the club, supporters have not been kept informed about what is happening. We hope that those intending to purchase the club will have a different attitude and will engage in a collaborative relationship that works in the best interests of Southend United.

That relationship could begin right now. We believe new ownership can rebuild this football club by working with supporters, and we would invite any interested parties to reach out to us immediately to discuss how they intend to incorporate the power of Southend United's fanbase into their vision for the club. Relevant representatives of supporter groups would be willing to sign NDAs if required.

The supporters of this club are its greatest asset. Another adjourned winding-up petition, a transfer and registration embargo that looks set to stretch into a ninth consecutive month and a third season in non-league football means this summer represents another low ebb, but we must stay strong and believe that a new, enlightened, future beyond Ron Martin is within sight.